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New York

President:	Mr. Yelchenko	(Ukraine)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Arancibia Fernández
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Italy	Mr. Lambertini
	Japan	Mr. Okamura
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez

Agenda

The situation in the Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic (S/2017/94)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic (S/2017/94)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Central African Republic to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and His Excellency Mr. Omar Hilale, Permanent Representative of Morocco in his capacity as Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/94, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central AfricanRepublic.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ladsous.

Mr. Ladsous (*spoke in French*): The Security Council has before it the report (S/2017/94) of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic and on the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). I should like to begin by giving the Council a brief overview of the main developments since the publication of the report.

The security situation in Bangui as a whole has gradually stabilized over the past few months. On 7 February, Central African internal security forces supported by MINUSCA launched an operation in Bangui to apprehend Youssouf Malinga, self-proclaimed leader of a self-defence group that on several occasions threatened civilians and fuelled inter-community tensions. Malinga's bodyguards opened fire indiscriminately in the course of the operation, killing two civilians and wounding a child. Malinga and two of his men were fatally struck during the exchange of fire that followed, while three Central African gendarmes were wounded. As a result of the operation, MINUSCA and the internal security forces continued to conduct robust patrols and outreach to communities.

In contrast to the relative calm in Bangui, violence associated with the seasonal migration continued in the north-west of the country. However, it should be noted that in general the movement of shepherds with their millions of head of livestock takes place peacefully. There is also the problem of ongoing clashes between rival ex-Séléka factions — such as the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique (FPRC) and the Union pour la paix en Centrafrique — which clearly continues to undermine the central region, along with a worrying ethnic connotation. The continuing clashes are fuelled by power struggles and disputes regarding control over resources and access to transport routes — all of which threatens the peace process in the country. But that also constitutes an intolerable burden for the population, as well as aggravating an already alarming humanitarian situation.

It is in that context, and against the backdrop MINUSCA's efforts to protect civilians, that on 11 February MINUSCA attack helicopters engaged a column of approximately 300 elements of the coalition led by the FPRC moving with pick-up trucks heavily armed with machine guns. The goal of the operation for us was to deter the group from crossing a demarcation line. We had told them and other warring parties about it in advance, as we wished to prevent a major conflict from occurring in the strategically important town of Bambari, on the Ouaka river. One of the only bridges over the river is located there, so this was very important.

As part of its intervention, MINUSCA destroyed at least four pickups, all this following very strong warnings from the Mission to both parties to the effect that MINUSCA was determined to use force to protect civilians, in line with its mandate and with the appeals made by the subregion, the African Union (AU) and the Government of the Central African Republic, which have continued to call for robust action on our part.

Despite our intervention and our advocacy efforts with the armed groups, certain coalition elements were nevertheless able to enter the town of Ippy, which is further west. Since then we have strengthened our

temporary operational bases in the zone and established a checkpoint north-east of Bambari to prevent any new movements by the coalition towards Bambari, which, again, is very strategically important. We deployed two sections of the Portuguese rapid-intervention force that has just been deployed to the Central African Republic, alongside two special-forces detachments around the town. I would note here that the Government issued a declaration on 13 February expressing firm support for MINUSCA's actions and urging the warring parties to immediately cease hostilities. The Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the AU representative in Bangui both issued declarations expressing strong concern at the continued fighting between armed groups.

This leads me to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) policy. As the Council is aware, an agreement on a strategy in that respect was reached with 12 of the armed groups within the framework of the Consultative Follow-up Committee, headed by President Touadera. However, the situation is constrained by the fact that the two principal armed groups that I have already mentioned, Noureddine Adam's FPRC and Maxime Mokom's anti-balaka group, remain outside of the framework of the DDR agreement. Along with the Government, we are continuing to engage with both groups to try to get them on board, since it is clear that if there is a DDR process to which not all armed groups have signed on, in the absence of a broader agreement aimed at addressing the legitimate grievances of those groups, the inclusiveness of the process cannot be guaranteed.

We know from our experience in other contexts that a DDR process that does not include all warring parties is likely to encounter major difficulties and be doomed to failure. We know also that for a DDR process to have greater credibility, the overall environment must be secure. In that respect, the two recent events that took place in Bangui and in the Bambari region remain causes for concern.

That is why, while continuing to aim for a broad agreement encompassing all parties, we are continuing to undertake a series of actions aimed at reducing the level of intercommunal violence and prolonging the pre-DDR initiative, which has already mobilized some 4,000 former combatants. In particular, we are exploring the possibility of implementing, jointly with the Government and the World Bank, a pilot DDR integration project that would ensure the disarmament and demobilization of 480 former combatants, half of whom would be integrated into the gendarmerie, following proper vetting procedures, and the other half involved in social reintegration activities.

All of this, in particular the recalcitrant attitude of these groups, must be addressed. In that context, I should like to highlight the initiative just undertaken by the African Union, ECCAS and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, accompanied by Angola, Chad and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to promote an African initiative for peace and reconciliation between the Government and all the armed groups in the Central African Republic.

The United Nations welcomes and supports this African initiative, as clearly this is a matter of collectively paving the way for a resolution of the conflict and the lasting peace that the Central African Republic has so long desired.

I believe that the efforts personally undertaken by President Touadera vis-à-vis the armed groups should continue, and all of these initiatives and elements must be brought together. We must also safeguard the gains made by the Bangui Forum and continue to work as proactively as possible towards achieving the goals of justice and reconciliation. However, the armed groups, and this is a very clear message that I am addressing to them, must not forget that the vast majority of the population of the Central African Republic aspires to the restoration of peace.

Let us not overlook the fact that we have made progress, in the framework of a formal dialogue, on all these initiatives. We deem particularly interesting the fact that on 30 January the national authorities launched a national campaign to recruit 500 police officers and gendarmes. We would note, moreover, that the first infantry company of the Central African Republic armed forces, which was trained by the European Union Military Training Mission, will soon be deployable. In addition, the appointment of the Special Prosecutor of the Special Criminal Court, whose selection we were eagerly awaiting, was announced this very day by the President; this is a very significant step forward in this process of ensuring justice for all.

MINUSCA is continuing to adapt to this evolving situation. We have significantly rearranged our deployment scheme and have endeavoured to enhance mobility. In particular, we have reduced the number of bases so as to ensure greater flexibility. We now have

the Portuguese quick-reaction force. An intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance company has been deployed. The air fleet has been reviewed, with particular focus on our night medical evacuation capability. We are also about to deploy a surveillance drone company provided by the French armed forces; I believe this will have a strong deterrent effect on those who continue to create problems on the ground.

In that context, we would have hoped to begin to see some peace dividends. Sadly, they remain elusive, as the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate; violence in the provinces is contributing to this state of affairs. Indeed, 2.2 million people, that is, more than half of the population, are affected to various degrees by food insecurity — the highest percentage in the world. Recent events have also led to the displacement of another 100,000 persons, which is a problem of course. It is also an issue for humanitarian actors, as the environment in the Central African Republic remains dangerous for them. It should be noted that 31 per cent — practically one third — of security incidents around the world in 2016 affecting the staff of non-governmental organizations took place, sadly, in the Central African Republic.

Last November during the conference held by the European Union, the Central African Republic received pledges of €2.2 billion, which is significant. Given the current situation, I believe it is now more important than ever that the countries and organizations that pledged funds fulfil their promises and disburse those funds. On the occasion of that conference, we signed the Mutual Engagement Framework, also known as the compact, a significant instrument that the Ambassador of the Central African Republic recently shared with the Council. It is a mechanism of extraordinary importance intended to strengthen the partnership between the country and the international community. I am absolutely convinced that it will help us in the coming period to address the deep-rooted causes of the conflict. In that regard, we will continue to do our utmost to support the authorities and to ensure that this receives the relevant follow up.

MINUSCA is the Organization's youngest peacekeeping operation. Soon three years will have passed since its inception. It will have been one year since President Touadera took office. Let us examine how far we have come. Three years ago the Central African Republic was on the brink of the abyss. Genocide was more than possible — it even seemed probable. And that posed a grave threat to the subregion. There was the security risk, a variety of destabilizing elements and extremism in the country and region. That is why the Council at the time recognized how urgent it was to act by authorizing the deployment of MINUSCA, building on the work that had already been accomplished by the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic.

Although that had its difficulties, I believe it can be said that the combined efforts of the Mission, the forces of Operation Sangaris and, at the time, the European Union-led peacekeeping force made it possible to avoid additional mass atrocities. Above all, those efforts also made it possible to avoid the complete collapse of the Central African State. Constitutional order has been restored. The Central African Republic is moving forward under its President and Government. It has a functional Parliament. The authority of the State is being strengthened in the provinces. All of that should be taken into account without, however, deluding ourselves.

Of course there are problems, but indicators are pointing generally in the right direction. I will give a small example. We all know how important agriculture is to the country. Last year agricultural production rose 26.3 per cent. That would suggest that farmers are returning. Moreover, we are seeing displaced persons returning to some of the regions, beginning to cultivate their lands once again. The economy has been stimulated.

We must not stop there. We must learn from past experience. There is one lesson in particular. Too often in the past the international community has reacted only at the height of a crisis. Then, as soon as the main symptoms have disappeared, the international community turns its attention away from the country and the crisis. In such cases, there is the danger of the resurgence of the crisis, and that must be avoided. We need to consolidate using all available means. We need to consolidate the economy and human rights. That is the purpose of the agencies and international financial institutions. Clearly for MINUSCA, stability, the establishment of lasting peace, the progress of national reconciliation and combating impunity and transitional justice are crucial. Disarming armed groups and security sector reform are also essential. Focus should be placed on the most affected regions.

More than ever, MINUSCA and the United Nations system as a whole must continue to support the people of the Central African Republic, thereby building a foundation for sustainable peace and development, such as established by the mutually agreed priorities in the compact. The Mission cannot be seen as the only answer to all the challenges being faced. However, provided that the established partnerships endure and grow stronger, and provided that the population itself is determined, then the establishment of lasting peace in the Central African Republic is within reach.

The President: I thank Mr. Ladous for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Hilale.

Mr. Hilale (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by congratulating Ukraine on its accession to the presidency of the Security Council for the month of February. I would also like to thank you, Mr. President, for your invitation. It is a pleasure and an honour for me to brief the Security Council on behalf of the members of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) in my capacity as Chair of the Central African Republic Peacebuilding Commission country-specific configuration.

I would also like to welcome the very detailed briefing provided by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Hervé Ladsous, on the situation in the Central African Republic. I also wish to commend him and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, for their tireless efforts to build peace in the Central African Republic.

I will brief Council members on current challenges and opportunities with respect to peacebuilding in the Central African Republic. As mentioned by Mr. Ladsous and pointed out in the report (S/2017/94) of the Secretary-General, the security situation in the country remains volatile despite the efforts of the Government and the presence of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).

Recent clashes pitting the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique, led by Noureddine Adam, and the Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique of Al-Khatim Mahamat, against the Union pour la paix en Centrafrique, led by Ali Darassa, as well as other clashes — notably those highlighted by Mr. Ladsous in his briefing this morning — have led to the loss of hundreds of lives and the displacement of thousands of women, men and children. Those unacceptable attacks serve to highlight the need to focus our efforts first and foremost on the stabilization of the security situation in the country in order to avoid more loss of life, displacement, and also to avoid actions that might compromise the progress achieved thus far in different key areas.

In that regard, the Central African Republic country-specific configuration welcomes the commitment of the national authorities to move forward, and we congratulate them for the adoption of the national strategy for disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation; the national security policy; as well as the five-year plan for capacity-building and development of the police and gendarmerie.

Furthermore, the adoption of the strategy for national reconciliation, as well as the recent vote by Parliament on legislation for the establishment of institutions enshrined in the Constitution, will contribute significantly to the long-term stability of the country. We have reached a critical juncture where the leadership of the Government, with the support of the international community, must be bolstered in order to build peace and combat the deep-rooted causes of the conflict, thereby paving the way for lasting peace in the Central African Republic.

We would like to congratulate all of the stakeholders who contributed to the success of the Brussels Conference for the Central African Republic held on 17 November 2016. In preparing for that conference, a meeting of the configuration was convened on 2 November 2016. During that meeting, configuration members were briefed by Ambassador Joanne Adamson, Deputy Head of the European Union Delegation to the United Nations; by Mr. Jean-Christophe Garret, Director of the country office of the World Bank for the Central African Republic; and by Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support and Head of the Peacebuilding Support Office, who also spoke on behalf of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

During the same meeting, the representative of the World Bank underscored the excellent cooperation on the ground generally speaking with MINUSCA, in particular in preparing for the Brussels Conference. I also noted that the representative of the World Bank warned against the risks of underinvestment in security and disarmament, which he considers as priorities and

necessary for the success of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan.

The Brussels Conference resulted in significant commitments of more than $2.2 billion of the $3 billion needed to implement the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan. The Plan includes three key pillars: promoting peace, security and reconciliation; renewing the social contract between the State and the population; and facilitating economic recovery. In that context, the Central African Republic configuration will devote a meeting to each of the three pillars, bringing together all the players concerned in order to discuss how to best support the advisory council for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan, which was established by His Excellency President Touadera.

Our efforts will also be devoted to the successful implementation of the Mutual Engagement Framework, a mechanism with which the Peacebuilding Commission has extensive experience, given that similar agreements have been implemented in other countries that are on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission, such as Liberia and Guinea. As mentioned by the Secretary-General in his report, the configuration encourages the Government, as well as its international partners, to make use of the monitoring mechanisms of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan and of the Mutual Engagement Framework in order to promote progress in different key areas, such as security, reconciliation and the provision of basic public services.

The ongoing projects supported by the Peacebuilding Fund are already aligned with the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan and the Mutual Engagement Framework. In 2016, an initiative to reduce community violence was implemented by the International Organization for Migration, under the leadership of MINUSCA, and provided temporary employment to approximately 2,000 ex-Séléka combatants and members of the communities to which they returned. In addition, the Fund supported the restoration of public security and basic services, including the rehabilitation and equipping of administrative buildings in the Obo and Birao prefectures. A major support package from the Fund for the fight against impunity, security sector reform and the promotion of political dialogue will be deployed in 2017 to help kick-start the implementation of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan and the Mutual Engagement Framework.

With regard to the subregion, which has always played an important role in the Central African Republic, the configuration would like to encourage the Economic Community of Central African States and the African Union in their recent mediation efforts with a view to strengthening the dialogue process initiated by the Government with the armed groups. The configuration also welcomes the upcoming participation of the Peacebuilding Commission in the first meeting of the International Support Group, a mechanism established to take the place of the International Contact Group on the Central African Republic.

The configuration would also like to welcome the African Union Solidarity Conference for the Central African Republic, which was held on 1 February, following the twenty-eighth African Union Summit, held in Addis Ababa. This African Union initiative is aimed at mobilizing additional support in Africa for post-conflict reconstruction and development, as well as for peacebuilding efforts in the Central African Republic in line with the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan.

Finally, the configuration will continue to support the establishment of the special criminal court and to inform its members through the reference group on the rule of law in the Central African Republic, with the support of the Global Focal Point. In that context, the configuration welcomes today's appointment of the Special Prosecutor. We hope that the appointment of the international magistrates will take place as soon as possible so that the court can convene as quickly as possible. We also welcome with gratitude the pledges to finance the Court's operations.

I would like to conclude by thanking the Central African authorities for their support for the configuration's activities. I would also like to thank the members of the configuration and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and his team, as well as the Peacebuilding Support Office, for their assistance, efforts and support for the work and contribution of the Central African Republic configuration.

The President: I thank Ambassador Hilale for his briefing.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013), concerning the Central African Republic.

I have the honour to brief the members of the Security Council in my capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013), concerning the Central African Republic. In my statement, I intend to reflect on my role as Chair since I last briefed the Council on 8 July 2016 (see S/PV.7734), and in doing so highlight the work of the Committee and the Panel of Experts.

There have been a number of positive developments in the Central African Republic, many of which have already been mentioned by Mr. Ladsous, including progress in disarmament and demobilization and security sector reform, the improvement in the security situation in Bangui, and the successful Brussels Conference in November. However, despite those developments, renewed violence in the central and northern parts of the country, as documented by the Panel of Experts, has reached a scale and intensity that has not been witnessed since early 2014, with the civilian population bearing the brunt of the upsurge in fighting.

On 5 August 2016, the Committee heard a presentation from the Coordinator of the Panel of Experts in connection with the Panel's midterm report. The Coordinator observed that ex-Séléka armed groups remained in control of key parts of central and eastern Central African Republic and that the rivalry between the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique armed group of sanctioned individual Nourredine Adam on one side, and by the Union pour la paix en Centrafrique (UPC) of Ali Darassa on the other, have negatively affected the humanitarian situation in the country. According to the Panel, arms-smuggling had continued in eastern part of the country through two routes: Am Dafok, north of Birao bordering the Sudan; and Bema, south-east of Bangassou bordering the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

On 5 August, Committee members also heard a briefing from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Bangura, who observed that, throughout the conflict, sexual violence had been systematically used by the armed groups in a climate of total impunity. She underlined the importance of the timely establishment of the special criminal court as an accountability measure in the fight against impunity. The Special Representative also encouraged delegations to consider adding names of individuals responsible for acts of sexual violence to the Committee's sanctions list.

On 23 August 2016, the Committee added two individuals to its sanctions list, Ali Kony and Salim Kony, whose father is sanctioned Lord's Resistance Army leader Joseph Kony. In that connection, I wish to thank the Panel of Experts for having submitted to the Committee four statements of case in 2016 for possible sanctions designation. Since its establishment, the Panel has submitted a total of 29 statements of case. The Committee also has before it the proposed designations of two individuals which are currently on hold. I hope that we can move forward on these proposals in due course.

On 9 September, the Committee held its sixth formal meeting, convened with the representatives of the Central African Republic and the regional States Chad, Ethiopia, South Africa, the Sudan and Uganda, in connection with the Panel's midterm report. The Coordinator underlined that the violent incidents of June 2016 in Bangui and north-eastern Central African Republic were a reminder that the security situation remained fragile. In the north, the violence was motivated by the desire of various Séléka groups to control not only transhumance routes and mining zones, but also oil concessions and related employment opportunities in private security. The Panel reported that sanctioned Nourredine Adam's efforts to reunify ex-Séléka factions had been unsuccessful, and that Adam's FPRC fighters were engaged against the UPC of Ali Darassa. On the arms embargo, the Panel encouraged regional States to cooperate with the Central African Republic authorities on submitting exemption requests to repatriate military equipment in their possession that belongs to the Central African Armed Forces, the Forces armées centrafricaines (FACA). The Coordinator also highlighted the issue of reported travel ban violations by sanctioned individuals Nourredine Adam and François Bozizé, and reminded regional States to use relevant exemption procedures to ensure compliance with the sanctions regime.

On 2 December 2016, the Coordinator presented an overview of the findings and recommendations contained in the Panel's final report, noting that while progress had been made on disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and reintegration and security sector reform, renewed violence in the central and northern Central African Republic harkened back to the atrocities of early 2014. Anti-balaka groups had first moved to Kaga Bandoro and Bambari to confront ex-Séléka, but lately some had started

cooperating with ex-Séléka in fighting against the UPC. Inter-Séléka rivalries had further intensified in Bria and its surroundings. In connection with calls by several Central African Republic Government officials to lift the arms embargo, the Panel expressed the view that the restoration of a single chain of command of FACA and effective control over national stockpiles were a precondition to allowing the rearming of FACA. Furthermore, the Panel reported that weapons continued to pour into the country via arms trafficking supply routes from the neighbouring States to the west, south and northeast.

On 25 January 2017, the Committee held its seventh formal meeting of the representatives of the Central African Republic and the regional States — Cameroon, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo — as well as fellow Committee members Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa, the Sudan and Uganda, convened in connection with the Panel's final report. The Coordinator highlighted a number of recent alleged travel ban violations by sanctioned individuals Nourredine Adam and François Bozizé, namely, Bozizé's travel through Kenya on 18 November 2016, and Adam's travel from the Central African Republic to Sido, southern Chad, on 30 October 2016, and from Moundou in southern Chad to Luanda on 14 December 2016. The delegation of South Africa also provided additional information in connection with its post-facto travel ban exemption request regarding the October 2015 travel of Bozizé.

Several of the participating regional States underlined their inability to control their vast and porous borders, and encouraged the international community to provide assistance in order to prevent the illicit trafficking of arms and ammunition. For my part, I conveyed appreciation to the delegations of Ethiopia, the Sudan and Uganda for having hosted visits by the Panel in October 2016, and reiterated my call on all regional States to continue further strengthening cooperation with the Panel, in particular as regards the Panel's visits to Chad and the Republic of the Congo in the first half of this year. I also encouraged regional States to consider returning lethal and non-lethal equipment to FACA and conveyed my readiness to assist States in preparing the relevant exemption requests to the Committee. The Committee looks forward to further information from the delegation of Cameroon in that regard.

During the reporting period, the Committee continued to provide guidance to the Central African Republic authorities and regional States concerning the implementation of the arms embargo and, in particular, by providing detailed information on the relevant exemptions procedures and the information requested in the Committee's guidelines. Let me also note that the Committee has been actively working with the Panel of Experts and other stakeholders, and is committed to continuing the dialogue and discussions with the Central African Republic Government in the future. I am convinced that the current security situation in the centre and north of the Central African Republic, as well as the abundance of arms in the country, oblige the Committee and the Security Council to continue closely monitoring the situation on the ground. In that respect, I wish to reiterate that the embargo must be implemented in order to protect the civilian population from continuing to bear the brunt of the conflict. In order to do that, we need to have better cooperation among regional States to effectively counter illegal arms trafficking and the recruitment of foreign fighters by armed groups.

Concerning the travel ban, the Committee and I myself, in my capacity as Chair, have continued to actively engage with concerned regional States — namely, Chad, Kenya, Ethiopia and South Africa — via letters and during formal meetings, advising of the crucial importance of ensuring that all mediation initiatives be conducted in conformity with sanctions measures, by using appropriate travel ban exemption procedures in pursuance of resolution 2339 (2017) and the Committee guidelines. Also, as no feedback was forthcoming, my representative and the representative of the Security Council presidency for the month of September engaged bilaterally with the delegation of Kenya to seek pertinent information with regard to alleged travel ban violations by sanctioned individual François Bozizé to Nairobi.

Similarly, the Panel has been actively engaging with concerned States by providing information on reported violations of the travel ban and advising on relevant exemption procedures. I would like to assure colleagues that the Committee will continue to work on the matter to ensure the effective implementation of the travel ban, and in that regard I would like to echo paragraph 8 of resolution 2339 (2017), urging the Central African Republic authorities to ensure that fraudulent, counterfeit, stolen and lost passports, as

well as invalidated diplomatic passports, are removed from circulation.

Concerning the asset freeze, the Panel reiterated in its final report that the sanctioned individual, Alfred Yékatom, has continued to receive his salary as a Member of Parliament, in violation of the asset freeze. The Panel also emphasized that after having been listed, Eugène Ngakosset has continued to receive his salary as an army officer, which constitutes another violation of the asset freeze. During my visit to the Central African Republic in May 2016, I outlined the relevant exemptions procedures to the asset freeze and underscored the importance of the Central African Republic authorities working with the Committee, the Panel and the Secretariat, in that regard. In connection with paragraph 48 of the Panel's final report, it is very important that the Central African Republic's Ministry of Finance and Budget issue a directive to banks operating in the country to freeze the assets of sanctioned individuals.

In conclusion, I firmly believe that the sanctions measures continue to be of relevance to the dynamics on the ground in the Central African Republic. As Chair, I will do my utmost to ensure that the Committee continues to be fully engaged in providing guidance with regard to the implementation of sanctions measures, including through the consideration of new sanctions designations. In the Committee's meetings with regional States, I have encouraged their representatives to turn to their capitals to seek confirmation that the Committee's sanctions list has been made available at airports, ports and border crossings, at State and commercial banks or other financial institutions and to national and commercial airlines. I will also work to ensure that the Panel of Experts receives the information that has been requested from Member States, particularly the regional States and the relevant Central African Republic authorities. I am convinced that cooperation between the regional States and the Panel is of crucial importance, particularly following the adoption of resolution 2339 (2017), by which the Council extended the arms embargo, travel ban and asset freeze until 31 January 2018, and the Panel's mandate until 28 February 2018.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Uruguay.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would first like to express our thanks for the briefings by Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations; Ambassador Omar Hilale, Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission; and you, Mr. President, as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013).

Uruguay recognizes that the events that have occurred in the Central African Republic over the past four months reflect the fact that while in many ways the Government, with the support of the international community, is working very hard to achieve stability and sustainable development for the country, it is still dealing with serious challenges. We should emphasize that the Government's efforts have resulted in considerable and noteworthy progress. The agreement between the Government and most of the armed groups on a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration strategy, together with the adoption of a national security policy and development of the internal security forces, is a significant step accepted by most of the Central African stakeholders, with the exception of some armed groups. In addition, the adoption in November of a national programme for reconciliation and social cohesion will provide a direction and strategy in areas such as social cohesion, transitional justice, dialogue with armed groups and the return and reintegration of internally displaced persons and refugees.

We realize that such efforts are designed to deal with the underlying causes of the conflict, which must be properly addressed if relapses are to be avoided. However, we note that unfortunately these advances have not yet been translated into progress that is concrete enough to meet the country's challenges. In that regard, Uruguay is concerned about the recent increases in violence mentioned in the Secretary-General's report (S/2017/94), including sporadic incidents in the capital of Bangui and attacks on peacekeepers, along with increasingly frequent and intense clashes between armed groups outside the capital, which have killed an estimated 287 civilians. Another reason for concern is the deteriorating humanitarian situation. According to the report, half of the estimated 4.6 million who make up the population of the Central African Republic remain dependent on humanitarian assistance. Of those, about 2 million are

facing extreme food insecurity, a significant increase over the 1.4 million who were in that situation in 2014.

It is therefore crucial to ensure that the international community continues to encourage and support the efforts of the Government of the Central African Republic to achieve peace and stability. In that regard, the mobilization of the international community at the Brussels conference in November was a strong expression of international solidarity and a commitment to learning the lessons of the past and not pulling out prematurely. We urge the international partners to make good on their commitments and remain actively engaged on the issue. Morevoer, the presidential decree of 5 November establishing the institutional structure for implementing, overseeing and assessing the Mutual Engagement Framework and the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan will be a great help in channeling the efforts of international partners and maintaining a high-level political commitment between the country and the international community.

Lastly, I would like to commend the entire staff of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, who play a fundamental role every day in protecting civilians, promoting and protecting human rights and international humanitarian law and supporting development of the country's national capacities, all in extremely demanding working conditions.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Central African Republic.

Ms. Kpongo (Central African Republic) (*spoke in French*): I take this opportunity to thank the Ukrainian presidency of the Security Council for organizing today's briefing on the Central African Republic and to commend the delegation on its conduct of what is a rather packed programme for such a short month. I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Herve Ladsous; Ambassador Omar Hilale, Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission; and you, Mr. President, for the clarity and quality of the briefings, which give us insight into the issues presented by the situation in the Central African Republic, which continue despite the great progress that has been made towards stabilization in various areas.

In the light of today's briefings, it is clear that the situation is still fragile and precarious, thanks to the persistent threats posed by armed groups, which are now fighting among themselves for control of the country's mining areas and thus keeping the level of violence high. The unspoken aim of some of their criminal activities, particularly among themselves, is to make the current political process fail and plunge the country back into crisis.

There are still many challenges to overcome, and it is time to move from words to deeds. The President of the Central African Republic has repeatedly outlined the priorities that must be met in order to restore the country, and they are cited in the Mutual Engagement Framework between the Central African Republic and the international community, whose signing at the Brussels conference on 17 November was extremely important for my country's future. The fact is that the reconstruction and development of the Central African Republic are conditional on a restoration of peace, country-wide security and national reconciliation. To that end, the President has engaged in an inclusive dialogue with the various armed groups, aimed at convincing them of the importance of signing on to the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme as a prerequisite for progress and with the goal of getting them to commit firmly and concretely to its success.

I have raised the issue of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation because previous speakers have sufficiently emphasized other aspects of the situation and because it is urgent that we begin that process. Implementing the Government's goals and priorities will require the support and guidance of the international community, which, through the Security Council, has a key role to play, as laid down in the Mutual Engagement Framework, which clearly defines the stakeholders' responsibilities. We all believe that implementing the new mechanism is indispensable if the Central African Republic is to achieve lasting peace and rapid, sustainable development. The international community and our bilateral and multilateral partners must act if we are to ensure that our hard-won progress is not compromised. The commitments made in Brussels will enable the Government to effectively implement its priorities, which depend to a large extent on mobilizing the promised funds.

Lastly, I would like to reiterate my gratitude to all the members of the Council — and especially the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional

Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, for his personal involvement — for their tireless efforts to enable my country to emerge from this long crisis.

The President: I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.